

SECRET

FROM:

## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

Accession No. XX-12445

Date Rec'd SA 13 Sept 46

To	Room No.	Date		Officer's Initials	Comments
		Rec'd	Fwd'd		
1. FBSK	2276			X	This document came in before and was sent to you on the 12 of Sept. That apparently was the Cairo copy. See note on its cover sheet. ____ Registry
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10. R					

ABSTRACT	INDEX
DATE JAN 6 1960	

Each comment should be numbered to correspond with number in To column.  
A line should be drawn across sheet under each comment.

Officer Designations should be used in To column.

Each Officer should initial (check mark insufficient) before further routing.

Action desired or action taken should be indicated in Comments column.

Routing sheet should always be returned to Registry.

For Officer Designations see separate sheet.

SECRET

(reverse)

(X)

POUCH 902 SECRET

CONTROL

xx 1 165

26 August 1946

TO: SSO, WASHINGTON  
FROM: SSO, LONDON  
SUBJECT: Maj Amin el HUSSEINI & Grand MUFTI

1. Reference LOND 213, WASH 1057, relative Grand MUFTI escape.

2. The report quoted below has been written by Major R. Thistlethwaite of MI-5, and a copy was given to us on 21 August 1946. Major Thistlethwaite has requested any additional information we can get on the MUFTI's escape and whether we can confirm or deny that he did, in fact, travel under the name ZAHALKI on an American plane.

3. On 8th June the French Embassy in London informed the Foreign Office that the MUFTI had escaped from France. Similar information was given to the British Embassy in Paris. Enquiries at the Quai d'Orsay showed that the French authorities had no clear idea of where the MUFTI was bound for, but felt he might have made use of a feigned illness to disguise himself. It was also thought he might have received assistance from the Syrians, since three members of his entourage had recently been issued with Syrian passports. A full enquiry was immediately instituted by the French and the Director of the Police Judiciaire, in whose charge the MUFTI had been held, was suspended. As the French Authorities felt satisfied that he had not crossed any land frontier, investigations were opened into the possibility of his having left the country by air.

"On 13th June a report was received by the Foreign Office that two passengers had embarked at Marseilles on the British S.S. "Devonshire" in circumstances which gave rise to the suspicion that one of them might be the MUFTI. The individuals concerned were a woman, who gave her name as Madame ISKANDER SHANA, wife of one of Ibn Saud's Counsellors who was previously one of the MUFTI's secretaries, and a male companion, not her husband, who wished to share her cabin on the grounds of his ill-health. This request was refused, but he was given accommodation close to hers. It appeared that, when arranging for his wife's passage, ISKANDER SHANA was insistent that this should be on a ship which was not calling at Malta. He also tried unsuccessfully, to insist he be allowed to accompany her on board to say goodbye.

"Our records showed that SHANA was a former Palestine Government official, who was later issued with a Saudi-Arabian passport as Director of Mines and Public Works in Saudi Arabia. He had, moreover, played an active part on the MUFTI's side in the Palestine rebellion of 1936-39. Recently he spent some time in London, where he was prominent at various Arab functions but was somewhat non-committal about the reasons for his visit. In view of SHANA's past

SECRET

CONTROL

**SECRET**

**CONTROL**

Mistry, and the suspicious nature of what had transpired in Marseilles, it was arranged to have the "Devonshire" intercept outside Egyptian territorial waters and searched.

The search of the "Devonshire" was being awaited when the French Foreign Office published the result of its enquiries. According to a statement by the Quai d'Orsay, issued on 12th June, the MUFTI left Orly airfield near Paris at 1100 hours, on 29th May, in a U.S. aircraft, travelling on a Syrian passport dated 28th November, 1945. A report was also received by the Foreign Office on 12th June, which evidently referred to the same investigation and which indicated that an individual calling himself MARUF DAWALIBI left Orly airfield on 29th May in an American Skymaster No. 346 bound from Washington to Cairo. As there was a Legal Advisor at the Syrian Legation in Paris called MARUF DAWALIBI, who had frequently been in touch with the MUFTI and who was still in France on 11th June, it was thought possible that the MUFTI or one of his entourage had used DAWALIBI's passport. Security Intelligence, Middle East, also confirmed that MARUF DAWALIBI was a known collaborator with the Germans who had later settled in France. Investigations into recent air arrivals were therefore instituted in Cairo.

While these enquiries into the MUFTI's possible escape by sea and air were proceeding, rumour had already spread throughout the Middle East of his arrival in Damascus. It was said he had travelled on a French aircraft, and an Egyptian police official actually stated he was on a French plane which landed at Almaza airfield in Cairo on its way to Beirut on the morning of 9th June. There was no independent confirmation of this report, though it was ascertained that a French aircraft had in fact passed through Almaza on that date. A statement subsequently issued by the French Ministry of Information and broadcast by the B.B.C. appeared to give some substance to the report. Rumours of the MUFTI's arrival in Damascus were, however, denied by the Syrian Prime Minister, who stated categorically that MAJ AMIN was not even in Syria and was certainly not the guest of either himself or the Syrian President. Nevertheless, reports that MAJ AMIN had, in fact, visited Syria continued to persist.

On 14th June the S.S. "Devonshire" was searched outside territorial waters by a naval party and representatives of the Palestine Police. It was subjected to a further search after the troops had disembarked at Port Said the following day. There was no trace of the MUFTI; Madame SHAMA and her companion, who were the only civilian passengers, were also able to prove their bona fides. The latter was apparently a Lebanese subject by the name of FAMIS ABOUD, who had spent the war years in Europe and was returning home on a Lebanese laissez passer. It was, however, of interest that both he and Madame SHAMA volunteered the information that they were ignorant of the MUFTI's whereabouts. The Palestine police representatives also considered it possible that Madame SHAMA would inform the MUFTI of the "Devonshire's" search on her arrival. A representative of Security Intelligence, Middle East, therefore arranged to have a further meeting with ABOUD later.

"Simultaneously, investigations were being pursued into the report of DANALIBI's air journey. It was discovered that a person using the name of HANIF DANALIBI had in fact arrived in Cairo by T.W.A. aircraft on 30th May, and had been in possession of an Egyptian visa valid for one month. He gave his address as Tevers House Hotel, but there was apparently no trace of him there. As rumour indicated the MUFTI might have left immediately for Syria by air, a further check was made of air-passengers to the Levant States, but there was no indication of a DANALIBI travelling by that route. The name HURSHID did appear on one manifest, but there were no police records of him and nothing beyond this common name to link him with the MUFTI.

Further enquiries were then made through the Syrian General in Cairo, who had known HANIF DANALIBI both at school and in his official consular capacity. He stated he had no knowledge of DANALIBI's return to the Middle East, and enquiries at the latter's former Egyptian address also produced no results. It was therefore felt desirable to make a further check of arrivals on American T.W.A. aircraft in the hope that one of the passengers might recognise the MUFTI's photograph. An officer of Security Intelligence, Middle East, who was sent to the airfield for this purpose, was however, informed by an official of the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior that no information could be made available "on instructions from the Palace". This was on 19th June.

Early the following morning a statement was issued from the Palace that the MUFTI had claimed sanctuary with the Royal House of Egypt. It is thought possible that he was induced to take this step as a result of the previous day's enquiries, which may have forced him out into the open and convinced him that he had best find a safer asylum at the Palace.

"The following conclusions can be made as a result of the above enquiries:-

- a) So far as could be ascertained from the very thorough search carried out, the MUFTI did not travel on the British S.S. "Devonshire", though the suspicion attaching to ISMAÏL SHANA has not been completely dissipated.
- b) It is probable that the MUFTI travelled on an American aircraft from France on 25th and/or 30th May, as was originally stated in the French Foreign Office Report."

4. Please send any information or comments you have on this report or the questions.

Distribution: Washington (2) ✓  
Paris  
Cairo  
Files  
Registry

SECRET

CONTROL

• ٦٣٢ م. ١٤٠

**COUNTRY** Palestine

**SUBJECT** "Afif's Corrections; His Vision of Arab Government Police Regarding Palestine

ORIGIN  
MANUFACTURER

**source**      **British**

## EVALUATION Reliable

20 August 1946  
25 September 1946

NO. OF PAGES

The following information has been obtained through an Arab source in Palestine, whose reports on Arab affairs have been reliable in the past.

1. It is reported that Hajj Muhammad Amin Rassani, the Mufti of Jerusalem, granted interviews to the following during the week of 3-10 August 1946:

Khalil Surani, member of the Palestine Arab Party; (A-6887b);  
Kamil Bajani, founder of the Palestine Arab Party and now  
secretary of the Jaffa Branch of the PAP;  
Tashbet Darwish, (on whom no prior information is available);  
Dr. Mustafa Boutnak, Arab Party Leader in Nablus.
2. The Mufti is reported to have expressed surprise that the Arab population had not reacted more vociferously to the recent entry of so many illegal immigrants into Palestine. He advised that demonstrations should be held to show the resentment felt by the Arab people.
3. It is reported that the Mufti does not approve the policy of the other Arab governments toward Palestine. He has therefore instructed the Arab Higher Executive to make it clear that the Arabs of Palestine alone have the right to determine the future of Palestine.
4. The Iraqi Minister to Egypt, Taha al-Askari, is reported to have requested an interview with the Mufti. The Mufti, while expressing his gratitude, refused to see him because he felt that Askari might lose favor with the Iraqi government; he was aware, he said, of his own unpopularity in Iraq.